



Black Hills
Health Care System
Department of Veterans Affairs



Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Carol Jensen, Public Affairs Liaison
Carol.Jensen@va.gov
605.720.7170
www.blackhills.va.gov

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 3, 2011

“No Veteran Dies Alone” Program Initiated by the VA Black Hills Health Care System

The VA Black Hills Health Care System is initiating a volunteer hospice program aimed at ensuring that Veteran hospice residents are provided comforting companionship during their final days and hours. The program is modeled after the national *No One Dies Alone* program that was developed in 1988. *No Veteran Dies Alone* (NVDA) provides the reassuring presence of a volunteer companion to patients in their final hours who would otherwise be alone. Companion volunteers assist in providing patients with a dignified and comforted death. They must be willing to hold the hand of the patient, play music, read to the patient, and provide other comfort care measures. They may choose to provide regularly scheduled hospice coverage as well as being on call. Program volunteers do not provide nursing care, and only assist as trained compassionate companions.

All NVDA companions must first be processed in as volunteers including fingerprinting, PPD (TB) testing, as well as attend hospice education. A special hospice/NVDA class will be held on November 22, 2011, from 8:30 am – 12:30 pm in Building 148, Room C108 the Fort Meade VA Medical Center, 113 Comanche Road, Fort Meade, SD. Persons interested in becoming a volunteer in the NVDA program should contact Cheryl Rieniets at the VA Black Hills Volunteer Service Program Office at 605-347-7206.

##